

POETRY MEMORIZATIONS/IMITATIONS

Two times per semester you will need to memorize a minimum of 14 lines of poetry of your choice (from the Anthology and by one of the poets we are studying) or write an imitation of a poem. You can choose a couple of stanzas from a long poem or a short poem to memorize. Please make sure that if you memorize something from the middle of a longer poem that you stop at a logical place. Please don't stop mid-sentence once you have your 14 lines, for example. You should strive to imitate the style of the writer (rhyme scheme, tone, meter, etc.) as closely as possible. You may change the subject of the poem, but attempt to write about that subject as if the particular poet you are imitating were writing about it. The imitations are due by 1:00 P.M. PST and memorizations will be done in class. You need to do one imitation and one memorization each semester.

Student Examples of Poetry Imitations

As you work on your imitations, keep in mind that your work should closely resemble the work of the poet you have chosen. You can choose a specific poem to imitate or you can imitate the poet's general style. If you choose to imitate general style, be sure to choose a poet whose style is easy to identify and well-structured.

The following imitations attempt to mimic a particular poet's use of rhyme scheme, meter, use of imagery and other distinctives that set one poet apart from another. I have placed the original poems first, with the students' imitations following.

The first imitation seeks to emulate the poetry of William Blake. This student has not picked a specific poem to imitate, but she seeks to copy Blake's use of imagery and rhyme and diction. This means that her choice of words is appropriate to Blake's time period and work. Her subject matter is also befitting of William Blake.

To Spring

By William Blake

O THOU with dewy locks, who lookest down

Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell one another, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turn'd
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our lovesick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head,
Whose modest tresses are bound up for thee.

To Summer

An Imitation of William Blake's *Poetical Sketches* Poems
By Jennifer Hoins

O daughter of the mountains of the sun,
Recall thy pledge; leave the lofty summit
where Eden's barred, and with thy plenteous
horn, strew the verdant blessings upon us.

The cool mist of mornings young shall part
Before thy unclad feet; thy gold'n locks
shall waken silent birds, and blossoms, sweet
from thy kisses, shall unclasp their buds.

Watch the herbs stretch forth their limbs towards thee;
See, O Summer, the trees old in seasons
Bow before you, the leaves in joyful glee wave
at your approach, and the peaches blush at your smile.

The next imitation corresponds to "The Stolen Child" by W.B. Yeats. This student has effectively imitated his rhyme scheme and the use of an italicized refrain. Her use of imagery is also evocative of Yeats.

The Stolen Child

WHERE dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berrys
And of reddest stolen cherries.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And anxious in its sleep.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed:

He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal chest.
*For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than he can understand.*

William Butler Yeats

Rebecca Pearsey
Urban Escape

Where the towers rise above
And streets are jammed with cars,
Where people push and shove
And smog dares dim the stars
Apartments stagger high
And seem to deeply sigh
The lonely tree
Echoes a yearning to be free.
*Move afar, O weary soul
Where the green hills gently roll
And the people there are few,
For the city's filled with havoc, and not the place for you.*

Where the moonlight slumbers upon
An empty parking lot,
The bubbled letters once ill drawn
Reflect a distant shot
Two cars let out a screech
Waking people with in reach
From the refuge that they sought
Where life slips to dreams
And they live another life
Nearly devoid of daily strife,
'Till the sun does brightly beam
*Move afar, O weary soul
Where the green hills gently roll
And the people there are few,
For the city's filled with havoc, and not the place for you.*

This next example is taken from a World War I poem. The student wrote about mountain biking instead, but he effectively imitates the poet's style.

Returning, We Hear The Larks

by Isaac Rosenberg

Sombre the night is:
And, though we have our lives, we know
What sinister threat lurks there.

Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know
This poison-blasted track opens on our camp -
On a little safe sleep.

But hark! Joy - joy - strange joy.
Lo! Heights of night ringing with unseen larks:
Music showering on our upturned listening faces.

Death could drop from the dark
As easily as song -
But song only dropped,
Like a blind man's dreams on the sand
By dangerous tides:
Like a girl's dark hair for she dreams no ruin lies there,
Or her kisses where a serpent hides.

"The Trail"

by Chris Haynes

Slippery the trail is.

And though my tires are fat, I know

The danger of the narrow track.

Pumping my straining legs, I only know

This devil-hellish trail must lead somewhere good-

To a place of ease.

But pain! ruts-ruts-strange ruts.

No! trickish grooves tampering in my path.

Slippery holes luring me in to painful death.

Mires could evolve from sure ground

As could death traps-

And evolve they did,

Like ruthless spider from tunnel unaware

Upon innocent victims.

The path slick, the trail rutted, the way treacherous,

But I would not trade it for the world.

The final example is an imitation of Shakespeare's sonnet style. This student has used Shakespeare's rhyme scheme and imagery and attempted to follow his meter as well. He has put a twist into his sonnet by making it about a humorous subject, but he has written about it with a serious tone. Shakespeare's sonnets are always serious in subject matter and tone.

Sonnet 73

William Shakespeare

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. 5
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire, 10
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Josh Bell

Imitation of a Shakespearean Sonnet
Anti-Beef Petition

In green and warm grass is where I once layed,
My life was consumed, 'twas eaten by sun,
Basking in the affects of heaven's rays,
'Til start of Fall when my end had begun,
Stolen away from my residence green,
Taken was I amid'st metal 'twas loud,
The evil ones grabbed me, they were so mean.
They yanked me, tried to squeeze my guts out.
The rest is all fuzzy, I am not sure,
What happened that day my life was so great,
I'm now living in, cold discomposure,
Hoping the new boss will never want steak,
Or my new home may be some person's food,
What am I? I'm meat, whose call once was moo.

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